THE PRECIOUS BLOOD OF CHRIST

E. W. RANDOLPH, D.D.

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THE PRECIOUS BLOOD OF CHRIST

BEING THOUGHTS ON THE DOCTRINE OF THE ATONEMENT

BY

B. W. RANDOLPH, D.D.

PRINCIPAL OF ELY THEOLOGICAL COLLEGE
HON. CANON OF ELY
EXAMINING CHAPLAIN TO THE BISHOP OF LINCOLN

Agnus Dei qui tollis peccata mundi:
Miserere nobis

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NEARLY A QUARTER OF A CENTURY

Verbum enim crucis, pereuntibus quidem stultitia est, iis autem qui salvi fiunt, id est nobis, Dei virtus est. . . . Quoniam et Judæi signa petunt, et Græci sapientiam quærunt; nos autem prædicamus Christum crucifixum; Judæis quidem scandalum, Gentibus autem stultitiam, ipsis autem vocatis Judæis atque Græcis, Christum Dei virtutem et Dei sapientiam.

1 Cor. i. 18, 21, 22, 23.

PREFACE

Some years ago the late Dr. Bright,[1] when Regius Professor of Ecclesiastical History in the University of Oxford, spoke of some who had "practically reduced the efficacy of our Redeemer's death to the subjective effect of a supreme effort of sympathy, whereby one, Himself sinless, could profoundly feel for the misery of sinners, could grieve over and repudiate their sin, and win them back to repentance and peace by the impressiveness of an unparalleled self-devotion. But this would keep Him still 'at a distance' from us; He would not have 'borne our sins,' He would only have sadly pointed to them; He would not have entered into that 'relation to God' in which they had 'involved' us,[2] He would only have

[1] *Morality and Doctrine*, p. 329.

[2] Dale, *The Atonement*, p. 424.

persuaded *us* to cancel it, to make our own 'atonement' by simply abandoning them. And how could such a theory account for the language of Scripture, with its manifold abundance of images and statements, all tending to form one idea—the idea of an actual barrier established by sin between man and the free outflow of Divine mercy, and removed by the intrinsic virtue of a Divine act,—the acceptance of death by the Incarnate Son of God, in accordance with that φιλανθρωπία[1] of the Father which was shown in giving Him to be a propitiation for our sins? For He who was thus given, who thus gave Himself, had been God from all eternity, from, and in, and with the Father. His Godhead could impart a Divine efficacy to all that He did or suffered in His manhood, and a Divine significance to that headship over our race, which made Him its sole competent representative. But in so representing us, He could, in the fullest sense, stand for us. By submitting to a Passion which was spiritual as well as physical, which included the agony of the Sin-bearer and the tremendous experience

[1] *i.e.* love to man.

of the Forsaken, He, the Man who ceased not to be God, upheld with unique transcendent emphasis, the eternal law of righteousness against sin, . . . in this sense, He 'gave Himself a ransom for many,' and our sins were in effect laid upon Him; He could take them away on our behalf, because, as the Lamb of God, He had borne our burden. . . . 'Vicarious,' 'Substitution,' 'Satisfaction'—we must not give up the use of these terms in a sense which is neither immoral nor arbitrary, but consonant to our Saviour's Office as Second Adam, and involved in the very perfection of His own miraculous love."

The warning contained in the above words of one of the greatest of our modern theologians is not unneeded now, and it has been the present writer's object in the pages which follow to re-state teaching of this kind about the Atonement in a succinct way and in view of some modern difficulties or misconceptions.

For it must be insisted on that the characteristic feature of Christianity is the doctrine of the Cross. Doctrines such as the Fatherhood of God and eternal Life are indeed immeasurably emphasized by Christianity; but

they are found, in however inchoate and vague a way, in many other religions. The Cross, on the other hand, is found in Christianity alone;[1] and the Cross meant for the first Christians that forgiveness of sins had been secured to them by the Death of Jesus Christ and by His subsequent bodily Resurrection.

I do not see how any candid reader can deny that this doctrine is taught—not incidentally—but taught explicitly and as the primary Blessing of the Gospel, by St. Peter and St. Paul in their Epistles and in their speeches in the Acts of the Apostles, by the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews and by St. John.

The attempt to get "back to Christ in the sense of making Christianity consist solely of what Jesus did and taught in the days before His burial—with the Resurrection left out—is a return to the position of the disciples in the days of their ignorance, if not to that of the enemies by whom He was crucified."[2]

Those who wrote the Gospels, and those for

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[1] See Dr. Bigg's *The Church's Task under the Empire*, Preface, p. xi.

[2] Dr. Stalker, *The Atonement*, p. 24.

whom they were written, believed in the Divine pre-existence of Jesus Christ, and they believed that through His death and resurrection He had secured to them the forgiveness of sins. He Himself had indeed plainly taught that He would give His life a "ransom for many," and that His blood was shed "for the remission of sins."

This is the Gospel of the New Testament, and "if there are those wishing to bear the Christian name who believe that Jesus was only the child of Joseph and Mary, and that He never rose out of the sepulchre, then we frankly concede to them that His death cannot have been anything like what we call the Atonement; but if this Man was, in His origin and destiny, all that the New Testament represents Him to be, then it harmonizes with the entire phenomenon to believe that His death . . . was a transcendent act, effecting for human beings in the world unseen a change by which have been secured both their peace with God here and their unending felicity hereafter; and this objective result of the death of Christ, anterior to our experience, yet requiring to be appropriated in experience, is

the primary benefit and virtue of the Atonement."[1]

It is of very great importance that, in our recoil from crude and even "repulsive" and "immoral" teaching about the Atonement, we should not be betrayed into casting away what is of the very essence of the Apostolic deposit of the Faith, always remembering that in thinking or speaking of the Atonement we are touching the mysteries which must necessarily transcend our reason.

CHARTHAM,
Christmas Day, 1908.

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[1] Stalker, *op. cit.*, pp. 42, 43.

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THE PRECIOUS BLOOD OF CHRIST

I

THE FACT AND THEORY OF THE ATONEMENT

WHEREAS the Christian Church has been guided to a clear definition about the Person of our Lord and the doctrine of the Incarnation, it is somewhat different when we turn to the Atonement. There is, of course, no doubt about the fact. It is a part of the Christian faith that in some sense the sacrifice and death of Christ was a necessary condition of forgiveness: that in some way or other the ground upon which God forgives sins is the death of Christ; but as to how that death makes this possible—as to why God selected this method—as to whether any other method was possible—as to why so transcendant an event was necessary—all this has never been clearly revealed, nor has

the Church attempted to define. So while we are bound to believe the fact, we are not bound to any special theory. "How and in what particular way Christ's sacrifice hath this efficacy there are not wanting persons who endeavour to explain, but I do not find that Scripture hath explained: we seem to be very much in the dark concerning the manner in which the ancients considered the Atonement to be made. And if Scripture has left somewhat in it unrevealed, left this method of the sacrifice of Christ mysterious, all conjectures about it must be, if not absurd, yet uncertain."[1] As a matter of history, speculation has been busy in the Church about it. Some theories have been exploded, all theories have come to be recognized as inadequate, very considerable latitude has been allowed, nothing has been defined, and scarcely anything forbidden, *so long as the fact of Christ's sacrifice and the truth of Christ's Person* has been held firm. It is, then, the truth of His Person on which all depends, for the Atonement depends on the reality of His mediation, and to be a Mediator He must

[1] Butler, *Analogy*, Pt. II. chap. v.

needs be both God and Man, and so it is the Incarnation which is the centre point of the Christian faith.

We must, however, remember that the Incarnation begins from above; it was God "who for us men and for our salvation came down from heaven" and was made Man. It was God Who in the person of Christ was reconciling the world unto Himself; and so it is, as Hooker says, the *Infinite worth of the Son of God* which is the ground of all things which we believe concerning His death and Passion; or, as Bishop Andrewes says, "That which setteth so high a price upon this sacrifice is this, that He who offered it to God is God."

Further, this vagueness as to any theory of the Atonement is only what we should expect. For before we can hope to have a complete theory we should need to understand what we cannot hope to understand, the exact relationship of the Eternal Father to His Son and the original relation of the Word of God to the created universe, and specially to the human race.[1] So here we can only speculate and

[1] See Dale, *The Atonement*, p. 7.

gather up the scattered fragments contained in Holy Scripture concerning these mysteries, while we rest securely on the fact that God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself. After all, we know that it is belief in the fact of the Atonement quite apart from any theory of it which has been the greatest moral force and power in the world; that behind all the intellectual problems which surround this mystery, and behind all the theories about it which have varied from age to age, there stands this fact, that the Cross of Christ has been the secret and motive power of the Christian life from age to age; "the heart of Christendom has gone out in welcome to this teaching as to hardly anything else. The showing of the Lord's death as the sacrifice of our Redemption has been from the first the chief service of Catholic Christendom and the crucifix generally its most popular symbol, while the proclamation of the glory of the Atonement in hymns, such as 'Rock of Ages,' has been the central theme of 'Evangelical worship.'[1]

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[1] Gore, *The New Theology and the Old Religion*, p. 134.

"As a matter of history the Atonement has lifted the burden of sin from countless human hearts and made the path of new life possible. Generation after generation of men have felt its reality in their own experience, and simple souls who could least explain it have lived most fully in its power. It has brought faith in God's love home to man in a way nothing else could do, firing the hearts of martyrs and missionaries in its cause and quickening the spiritual life of innumerable men." [1]

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[1] Illingworth.

II

SIN AND THE ATONEMENT

We can go on to ask, What is the reason of this attractive power of the Cross? The answer is, because it satisfies a true instinct of human nature. Man is not as he ought to be, and he feels that he cannot approach a holy God without some mediation and some propitiation. This instinct is illustrated by the almost universal prevalence of sacrifice, and if we grant that the idea of fellowship and communion lies at the root of the origin of sacrifice, yet it still remains true that the thought of propitiation very soon made itself felt, and was emphasized more and more as time went on, as, for example, in the sacrificial system of the Old Testament; and to this instinct, practically universal as it seems to be, the Atonement came as the "Divine solution of the problem

which man had been striving ineffectually to solve." [1]

It seems from the first to have supplied a moral want, and if it be asked, "Do you mean that the early Christians believed that God could not have forgiven man without the Cross?" we may reply, they would surely have said, "We dare not limit the omnipotence of God." But we may ask in reply, "Supposing the Apostles had preached God's forgiveness of sins without the Cross, would the conscience of men have believed them? If not, why not? Because the conscience of men believes that God's holiness needs some reparation for sin. So that the rudest of pagan altars and the truest breathings of the Christian heart are at one in affirming the solemn truth that man for his evil deeds does worthily deserve to be punished," and sin "must be atoned for somehow if God is to be in a moral sense God." [2] But nowadays we are face to face with a serious recoil from the doctrine of the Cross.

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[1] Illingworth, *Christian Character*, p. 18.

[2] Liddon, *Sermons on Some Words of St. Paul*, p. 28.

The doctrine of the Atonement is either ignored and the language of the Apostles explained away, or else it is lowered to the level of a great moral appeal, not differing in kind from the appeal which any martyrdom for the sake of conviction must make upon serious men. Why is this?

The sense of sin has been immeasurably weakened, and with it the sense of the holiness of God, so that the moral idea which underlies the Atonement and the sense of moral want which it satisfies have been largely taken away. Men in general have little sense of sin as an outrage on the holiness of God.

Language is sometimes used which suggests that Christianity invented the idea of atonement or expiation; but in truth "every great religion, every earnest generation of men, has been pre-occupied with the sense of sin, and the struggle for its abolition, either by ascetic or by sacrificial expiation. And it was to this great world-want that the Christian Atonement appealed."[1]

Nowadays, however, we are all too familiar

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[1] Illingworth, *Doctrine of the Trinity*, p. 156.

with an exceedingly shallow and inadequate sense of what sin is.

Sin is regarded mainly as an anti-social vice or a necessary stage in human development, and God, if He is not buried in His own creation and His transcendence sacrificed to His immanence in a way almost indistinguishable from Pantheism, is thought of as a good-natured and indulgent parent, who governs His children on no fixed principles, and in any case makes everything right at the last.

But Christians know that, the end of man being union with God, sin is the universal obstacle to the attainment of this end, and the conquest of sin therefore is a first condition of the Christian life.

And by sin we mean not anything inherent in our bodies—we are not Manicheans,—nor again is it ignorance, for then we must limit salvation to the wise; nor is it desire, but sin is lawlessness. Its essence is disobedience, selfishness, and wilfulness—a created will setting itself at defiance with the will of God. It is sin, and sin only, which mars the purpose of human life. "Sin lieth at the door," and in

proportion as we hold fast to this humiliating but wholesome thought, we shall cling to the doctrine of the Cross, and the Atonement, which is the pledge of our conquest of sin, can not only not be divorced from Christianity, but "must be put in the first rank of Christian doctrine." But speak of sin as if we were necessarily outgrowing it, obscure the severity with which the Bible and our Lord Himself speak of sin, and of the misuse of opportunities, and men will see no need of the Atonement, because they will no longer believe that they are sinners in any real sense, or that God is a Holy God, Who by the very necessity of His nature hates sin with an intensity we cannot overstate. Who will deny that one great need of our age is a more adequate idea of the sinfulness of sin? Without this the doctrine of the Atonement must always be as of old, either "folly" or a "stumbling-block," or both.

But further, the one-sided way in which the doctrine has been presented is responsible to a very large extent for this recoil of which we speak. The crude theories which have been put forward have driven men into opposition.

The truth is that what Christ has done for us can never be safely separated from that which He does in us by His Holy Spirit, and by the co-operation of our wills. We cannot as individuals be reconciled to God unless we are, however gradually, becoming like God.

Salvation means deliverance from the actual power of sin to a state of righteousness and fellowship with God. This is in no way possible unless man is becoming more like God. "There is no shadow of a doctrine of imputed righteousness in the New Testament such as will suffer us to imagine that there can be any final reconciliation for an individual man with God on any other basis than likeness of character."[1] The Redemption wrought out for us on the cross must be wrought out within us by the power of the Holy Ghost and by our own efforts. Great harm has been done by men talking of Christ's "finished work" as if it were a substitute of our own effort; but Christ will not redeem us without our co-operation: it is within us, not apart from us, that our redemption must be wrought out.

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[1] Bishop Gore.

First, the great act of Redemption is accomplished by the Second Adam, who offered a human life of perfect obedience, and sealed the sacrifice by His own blood, this sacrifice of obedience being "accepted and ratified" by the resurrection; and then from His ascended Manhood there comes forth the power of the Holy Ghost to unite us to Himself, so that sharing His character and sufferings we share also His glory, His obedience, His sacrifice.

The shedding of His blood has won for man a new power, the power to put down evil within him. It is the supreme example of what is noblest in human life, viz. voluntary suffering on behalf of others. He died that we might be forgiven; He died also to "make us good," as the hymn says.

"We must not stop short of the Gospel of being accepted without going on to the Gospel of being good."[1] The redemption for us has to be wrought out within us, so that the Cross stands midway between Christmas Day and Pentecost. It is the Second Adam who suffers, and our redemption must be worked out with

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[1] Du Bose.

our co-operation by the power of the Holy Ghost, as our characters approximate, however gradually, and at however great a distance, to the Perfect Man. "Whom He foreknew He also foreordained to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the Firstborn among many brethren;" and "If Christ is in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the spirit is life because of righteousness."[1]

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[1] Rom. viii. 29, 10.

III

THE IDEA OF MEDIATION INVOLVED IN THE ATONEMENT

It is worth while remembering that the visible government of the world is carried on by mediation. God gives us His natural gifts through others. Our life, our food, our education come to us through others. So the whole analogy of nature, as Bishop Butler says, removes all imaginable presumption against the general notion of a mediator between God and man. There is no sort of objection from the light of nature against the general notion of a mediator between God and man, considered as a doctrine of Christianity.[1] As to what way He who is the Mediator between God and man should exercise His mediatorial office, must

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[1] *Butler's Analogy*, Part II. chap. v.

depend upon man's need and God's will. As things are, man's sin has made it necessary to exercise it through death. What, then, has the death of the Mediator secured for man? Not freedom from temporal punishment. To be forgiven is not to be let off temporal punishment. To be forgiven is to be restored to fellowship with God. Forgiveness rescues us from alienation from God, which is the essence of sin, but it does not let us off what we mean by punishment for sin. Rather it prepares us for suffering—"heard, forgiven, punished," that is always the law of God's dealing with men, for readiness to suffer is ever a mark of true repentance. "Which we most righteously have deserved." [1] We know, as a matter of fact, that men, though forgiven, are punished every day; the forgiven drunkard, for example, is punished by shortened life and weakened constitution. But by Christ we are saved and put in a state of salvation, because we are brought into fellowship with God, for Christ's death has made it possible to accept man's repentance and welcome man back again.

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[1] Litany.

So Butler, "Christ rendered repentance efficacious by what He did and suffered. He obtained the benefit of having our repentance accepted unto eternal life." [1]

But this brings us face to face with the intellectual difficulty (it is not at all a difficulty of the heart), why could not God forgive man without mediation or atonement? I do not think that we have in Scripture a complete answer to this difficulty.

It may well be, as has been suggested, that "sin in itself, as being a terrible offence, requires a terrible penalty. If the righteousness of God is not a mere phrase, but a reality, and if sin in man is a reality also, and not merely on the surface, but penetrating deeply into his moral being, a great act of atonement is objectively necessary, because of the nature of God and the sinfulness of man." [2]

We do not know whether this is so. The precise difficulty does not seem to have occurred to the writers of Scripture, unless it is in the Epistle to the Romans, where St.

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[1] Part II. chap. v.

[2] Stone, *Outlines of Christian Dogma*, p. 93.

Paul speaks of our being "justified freely by God's grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: whom God set forth to be a propitiation through faith, by His blood, to show His righteousness, because of the passing over of the things done aforetime, in the forbearance of God."[1]

The argument of the Apostle seems to be that God's character would have been misunderstood if He had merely declared man's forgiveness without man having on his part made some great act of reparation. Man, through God's "passing over of the things done aforetime," would have misunderstood the principles on which the moral government of the world was carried on. But there has intervened a great and momentous event, the event of the death, the sacrificial death, of Christ.

"The gift of Divine forgiveness in Christ has been bought at so costly a price, so splendid an act of reparation on the part of Christ, the representative Head of the new humanity, that we cannot misunderstand Divine

[1] Rom. iii. 25.

love in forgiving as if it carried with it any abandonment of moral requirement." [1]

Christ on the cross manifests the justice of God. God, if He be God, must hate sin and cannot act as if He did not hate it, neither could we believe in a God who did not manifest this justice.

> "My God to know that Thou art just
> Gives hope and peace within,
> We could not in a mercy trust
> Which takes no count of sin."

The essence of punishment is loss inflicted for wrong done. It is a manifestation of justice. But repentance cannot affect the past. It can only have to do with the future. So, unless the past can be undone by repentance, there is no reason in the nature of things to suggest that repentance would be of itself sufficient.[2]

Further, our natural instinct or conscience

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[1] Gore, *The New Theology and the Old Religion*, p. 132.

[2] Dale, *The Atonement*, p. 373.

seems to tell us that repentance of itself is not sufficient. The sense of guilt is a sense of liability to the penalties of sin, and this sense is not removed by mere sorrow. On the contrary the reverse is true. The more sorrow we have the greater is our sense of guilt. The importance of this moral fact is, that it seems to force a man to look out of himself for a mediator ; and this is no fancy of an educated conscience, but rather is illustrated as an almost universal instinct of man by the prevalence of propitiatory sacrifice, so that a motive of repentance alone being sufficient appears to be contrary to the general sense of mankind.[1]

Once more, our own experience suggests (following Bishop Butler) the same truth. A man is perpetually drunk or squanders his fortune. Will repentance and amendment prevent the natural consequence ? We know it is not so. The utmost he can do is to mitigate them, and that he can often only do by calling in the help of others. That is the principle

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[1] Butler's *Analogy*, II. v. § 4 ; Oxenham, *Catholic Doctrine of the Atonement*, p. 338.

of mediation and the principle of vicarious suffering.

We depend on others more than ever when we have made ourselves obnoxious to penalties. On the other hand, it is plainly clear that, as things are constituted in this world, other people may do much for a guilty man so as to avert the full consequences of wrong-doing.

That is to say, that in this world, there is evidently room for mercy as well as justice, compassion and equity as well as punishment. We constantly see innocent people voluntarily suffering for sake of others. And all this is true as regards temporal punishment for sin ; therefore there is no presumption against a like merciful modification of law in regard to the eternal consequences of sin. So the light of nature suggests—

First, that there is no presumption against notion of mediator as a doctrine of Christianity.

Secondly, that there is no adequate reason for thinking that repentance is enough, in fact the reverse is true, *i.e.* we have every reason to fear that repentance is not enough, and our conscience bears witness to this.

On the other hand, it appears that there is room left for mercy.

Here revelation steps in and confirms what our own experience suggests.

It confirms every fear as to future consequences ; it confirms the sense of guilt.

It denies that repentance alone is sufficient.

It affirms that One has interposed by whose sufferings and death our repentance may be made efficacious.

IV

THE FORESHADOWING OF THE ATONEMENT IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

By the sacrificial system of the Old Testament and the references to it in the New Testament, God seems to have set His seal to what may have come to man by way of natural instinct, *i.e.* the conviction that man, being what he is, cannot approach God without sacrifice, and sacrifice often involving death. There is, of course, a great question as to the origin of sacrifice. Here is the old question, Did it arise from natural instinct, or is it a part of some primæval revelation ?[1] And there is the modern question as to how far the idea of expiation was involved in the earliest cases of sacrifice. It would appear that the primitive sacrifice was often, if not always, a sacramental meal, and

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[1] Butler's *Analogy*, II. v. 6.

implied the communion of man with the tribal Deity and with his fellow tribesmen. It denoted kinship between the God and His worshippers cemented by a common seal.

Nevertheless, the notion of expiation or propitiation very soon became an important element in sacrifice; while in the Jewish religion there is no doubt that the idea of expiation is emphasized as the idea of sin becomes more and more prominent.

We may observe also that at the first mention of sacrifice in the Old Testament, God is represented as approving an offering with blood; and the comment in the Epistle to the Hebrews that Abel offered to God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain,[1] may mean that Abel realized in some way that, since sin had entered into the world, "without shedding of blood is no remission."

Further, it must not be forgotten that we have to account in the Old Testament for sacrifices in which there was no communion, like the Burnt Offerings which were wholly consumed by fire; and the very name "Burnt

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[1] Heb. xi. 4.

Offering" seems to indicate that, as regards the origin of sacrifice, the idea of a gift made to God may, after all, prove to be as old as the idea of a sacramental meal.[1]

What has been brought out by recent investigation seems to be this, that one early idea of sacrifice was that of a sacramental meal; another was that of a gift to God; while the idea of propitiation, though not always absent, was not prominent in the first ages. This is borne out in the sacrificial system of the Old Testament, because the sin offering was a creation of the later code, when the sense of sin had been deepened by the teaching of the prophets.

In any case sacrifice is the centre of the Old Testament religious system, and, taken as a whole, we may say that that system looks backward and forward; backward because it endorses men's grounds for thinking that God is not to be approached without sacrifice, and forward because it points to the true Sacrifice for sin. So this Old Testament system impressed on men's minds a sense of sin, while

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[1] Davidson, *Theology of the Old Testament*, p. 311.

it dimly adumbrated the deliverance which was to come, and thus the Christian Atonement appears as the solution of the problem which man has been striving to solve.

All the sacrifices of the Old Testament can be brought under three heads, indicating different aspects of the Atonement—

The Burnt Offering.
The Sin Offering.
The Peace Offering.

The Burnt Offering.—It was wholly consumed by fire, and its leading idea was the complete self-dedication of the offerer. It was an act of entire surrender to God ; the victim being wholly consumed on the altar. It foreshadowed Christ's complete offering of Himself, and it was continually offered day by day, pointing to Him who everliveth to make intercession.

The Sin Offering.—The end of all sacrifice is communion and union with God, and the order in which these sacrifices are revealed in the Old Testament is Burnt Offering, Peace Offering, Sin Offering ; but the order in which

they came to be applied and used is Burnt Offering, Sin Offering, Peace Offering. Why is this? The reason is that after offering the Burnt Offering and when about to proceed to the Peace Offering men were pulled up by a sense of sin. Sinful man cannot approach an all-holy God; and so we find the Sin Offering was introduced as the sense of sin became deepened among the Jews.

In the sacrifices of the patriarchs the idea of expiation is, as we have seen, altogether in the background. Their sacrifices are either Burnt Offerings or Peace Offerings, *i.e.* sacramental meals. The Sin Offering was introduced later on, emphasizing the fact of sin and indicating the need of expiation as a preliminary to communion with God. Its special characteristics were—

First, the sprinkling of blood which atones because the shedding of blood meant the surrender of life.

Secondly, the victim must be without blemish, pointing to the spotless Offering, and being typical of a sinless Life offered in the place of the imperfect life of the worshipper.

Thirdly, the imposition of hands. This

accompanies other forms of sacrifice and represents the dedication of the animal to God, but in the case of the Sin Offering, it seems further, according to ancient Jewish tradition, to have meant the transference of guilt from offerer to offering.[1]

The Peace Offering.—This was a sacrificial meal. It was always a communion. It partook of some of the characteristics of the Burnt Offering and the Sin Offering, so it was profoundly typical of the Holy Eucharist, which carries on and applies to the individual the merits of the Atonement, and brings us into union with God and with one another.

So we find these great ideas underlying the Old Testament—

The Burnt Offering, typical of the continual pleading and the perfect character of Christ's sacrifice.

The Sin Offering, which sets out the expiatory and propitiatory character of Christ's sacrifice.

The Peace Offering, symbolizing especially

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[1] See Willis, *Worship of the Old Covenant*, p. 141.

reconciliation and atonement between God and man.

Another leading aspect of the Atonement, not, however, symbolized by these sacrifices, was that of redemption. This was left for the Passover to foreshadow : the Passover was the completest type of the Atonement considered as a redemption. The underlying thought of the word used for redemption in the Old Testament is, "something done at a great cost." Thus the deliverance of the whole nation from the bondage of Egypt was done at a great cost, and so became the great Old Testament type of the Christian redemption from the bondage of sin. So the song of the redeemed is actually called the song of "Moses and the lamb," [1] for Christ at a great cost, the cost of "His own blood," redeemed the race of men.

In this brief review of the sacrificial system we must not omit the Day of the Atonement. The purpose of the Day of Atonement was to make atonement for—*i.e.* to hallow—the Holy Places once a year, *i.e.* no sacrifice could be offered until the ceremony of Day of Atonement

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[1] Rev. xv. 3.

had been gone through, and pre-eminently the sprinkling of the blood in the Holy of Holies (for the application of the blood was an application of life), which gave their virtue to all the sacrifices of the year. Thus, then, these two great events stand out as specially symbolical of Christ's work. He is the Victim, the true Paschal Lamb in the Passover. On the Day of Atonement He is the Priest who enters into the Holy of Holies with His own Blood; and just as the Aaronic sacrifices depended on the High Priest's action on the Day of Atonement, so the efficacy of the acts of the Christian ministerial priesthood depends on Christ's work on Calvary and His continual pleading within the veil.

V

THE ATONEMENT IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

When we pass to the consideration of the Atonement in the New Testament, we find three words, or group of words, setting forth different aspects of the Atonement.

The first word is Propitiation. It is used by St. John,[1] "He is propitiation for our sins," and by St. Paul,[2] "Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in His blood."

What, then, is the scriptural notion of propitiation?

There is no notion of appeasing some one who is angry with a feeling of personal resentment. It means rather the altering of the

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[1] 1 John ii. 2; iv. 10, ἱλασμός.

[2] Rom. iii. 25, ἱλαστήριον.

character of that which causes a necessary alienation. It is the removal of the barrier between God and man. Scripture doth not speak of propitiating God, but we read of propitiation being made, concerning or in the matter of our sins, or of the sinner ; *i.e.* there is a necessary alienation between God and man owing to man's sin. Thus God is always love and does not change, but just because He is Love, and Holy, and Righteous, He cannot welcome the sinful in his sin, nor treat sin as if it were not sin, so this barrier of sin checks the outflow of the love of God, and if God be God something is needed to remove the cause of alienation. It is not the character of God that changes (God is always love), but it is man who must be changed so that a Holy God can love him without doing violence to His holiness. So St. John says Christ is propitiation "in the matter of our sins." Christ as the Second Adam, truly representing humanity, "recapitulating humanity in Himself," satisfies in our nature the Divine law of holiness. God's requirements are not lowered ; rather they are fully satisfied in our nature by the Second Adam, who did for us what we could not do for ourselves, and so the

barrier is removed, and God can look with pleasure on the race of men as He sees it gathered up in His Incarnate Son.

He will not pass over the sin, but He can forgive it now that the Cross testifies to all who can understand it, the real wickedness of sin and the intense love of God.

All this was shadowed out in the Sin Offering the characteristic feature of which was the sprinkling of the blood. It is the blood which is said to make propitiation to cover, to cleanse. Why? Because the blood shed meant surrender of life. So antitype answers to type.

"The blood of Christ cleanses us from all sin," because the shedding of blood meant the surrender of life. By dying on the cross He made this life available to all who believe in Him.

As the offerer identified himself with the victim by pressing his hands on his head, so it is only when we share Christ's life that we can effectually plead His merits.

"If the blood of bulls and goats and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh, how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through

the Eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?"[1] He works out within us the redemption He wrought for us.

"The strong convergence of Apostolic writings of different and varied characters seem to show that the idea of sacrifice as applied to the death of Christ cannot be put aside as a merely passing metaphor, but is interwoven with the very weft and warp of primitive Christian thinking, taking its start (if we may trust our traditions) from words of Christ Himself."[2]

"Our Lord spoke of His approaching death in terms proper to a sacrifice such as that by which the first covenant had been inaugurated."

The second word is Redemption, or Ransom. "There is one God, and one Mediator between God and man, Himself man, Christ Jesus, who gave Himself a ransom for all."[3]

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[1] Heb. ix. 13, 14.

[2] Sanday and Headlam, *On the Epistle to the Romans*, p. 92.

[3] 1 Tim. ii. 5, 6.

The word "ransom" is used by our Lord of Himself: He speaks of Himself as the Son of man, who came to give His life a ransom for many.[1] Practically the same word is used also by St. Paul: "Being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus," "In whom we have redemption."[2] All these passages speak of the Atonement under the figure of Redemption or Ransom; so Holy Scripture represents Christ as rescuing us from the bondage of sin and Satan, and translating us from the kingdom of darkness to the kingdom of God's Son.[3] The idea receives light from the deliverance from Egypt, which was, in fact, the Old Testament Redemption. It would appear, as we have already seen, that the root idea of redemption in the Old Testament is something done at a great cost—an expenditure of love or power or both.

God is said to have delivered Israel from

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[1] St. Matt. xx. 28; St. Mark x. 45, *λύτρον ἀντὶ πολλῶν*.

[2] Rom. iii. 24; Eph. i. 7; Col. i. 14.

[3] Col. i. 13.

Egypt "with a mighty hand and stretched-out arm," which means, of course, that He had rescued and redeemed His people with a great display of power. It was not that He paid any price to Pharaoh. He claimed the life of the firstborn, while He accepted the Paschal lamb on behalf of the Israelites' firstborn: "When I see the blood I will pass over." So in the true Redemption there is no price paid to Satan (a thought as repulsive to us as it was common in earlier ages); but God claims men's life, and the life of the Second Adam, who is our true Representative, is given up for us, and He becomes our Redeemer. There is some "mystery of purchase," for St. Peter says, "We are purchased by the precious blood of Christ," and St. Paul, "Ye are bought with a price;" but we must not press this metaphor too far, still less must we think that God owed anything to the devil except punishment, as St. Anslem says. Man, however, does, in some way, sell himself by sinning into the tyranny of sin, and Christ rescues us back. Something of this kind underlies the metaphor. Sin is a state of bondage, and man is delivered or redeemed or bought back by Christ. "Thou

art worthy," say the saints in the Apocalypse, "to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for Thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by Thy blood."[1]

The third word is Reconciliation, or Atonement.

It is comparatively frequent in St. Paul's Epistles. "If," he says in one place, "while we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son, much more, being reconciled, shall we be saved by His life;" and he adds, "But we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have received the reconciliation."[2] "God," he says in another passage, "was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself, and having committed unto us the word of reconciliation."[3] He speaks elsewhere of our being reconciled back again to God.[4] The words of the second article, "that He might reconcile the Father to us," is not the scriptural way of putting it, and the danger of

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[1] Rev. v. 9. [2] Rom. v. 10, 11.
[3] 2 Cor. v. 18, 19.
[4] Eph. ii. 16; Col. i. 20–22.

so stating the matter is lest we should think of a discordant will between Father and Son, which is impossible. The Atonement was altogether and beyond all question a work of love, and the love of the Father is one with the love of the Eternal Son.

"God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life."[1]

"In this was manifested the love of God towards us, because that God sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him."[2]

Any doctrine which is at variance with this truth is unscriptural and mischievous, for it was the character of man which needed readjustment and alteration. By the obedience of Christ, the Second Adam, God is able to regard the race of men with fulness of unhindered love without violating the holiness of His own holiness; and penitent man is at one with God through the blood of Christ.

Starting with this truth, that Christ is

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[1] St. John iii. 16. [2] 1 St. John iv. 9.

the Second Adam, and therefore completely represents mankind, we may say that—

He makes propitiation for man's sin by satisfying in man's nature the Divine law of holiness ;

And so rescues us from the power of darkness and the tyranny of sin ;

And reconciles us back again to God and makes us one with Him.

We may separate in thought between the act of Christ's atonement and the process of reconciliation, but the meaning of the word "atonement" or "reconciliation" cannot be limited to the supreme act by which He expiated the sins of the world. For fundamentally this word "atonement" and all that it implies is coextensive with the whole work of Christ, both before and after His Ascension, which had for its object the bringing man back into union with God. If the act in some sense culminated on Calvary, yet the process is the continual application by the Holy Spirit of the virtues and merits of that great sacrifice to the individual soul. Potentially all men are reconciled to God by the death of Christ. Actually they become so by the power of the Holy

Spirit bringing them into contact with His risen and glorified life. In other words, let me repeat we cannot separate Christ's work for us on the cross from His work in us by the Holy Spirit. So many misconceptions have arisen from isolating the doctrine of the Atonement, either from the Incarnation on the one hand, or from the Sacraments on the other. But we have to remember that "Good Friday stands midway between Christmas Day and Pentecost," for it is the Incarnation on which all He did on Calvary depends. He suffered as the representative Man, and yet His sufferings are to us what they are because He is truly God. So similarly it was in view of Pentecost that He said, "It is expedient for you that I go away." The coming of the Holy Ghost depended on the Ascension, for it was from His ascended humanity that the Holy Ghost came down.[1] And it is the Holy Ghost who brings us into contact with Him. Apart from Pentecost, the Sacraments are nothing. It is the Holy Ghost who comes and effects in His members the spiritual presence of Christ

[1] Acts ii. 23.

Himself, causing Christ to be not outside us but within us. This He normally does through the Sacraments, and His operation is, of course, not mechanical but calls continually for the co-operation of man's will. We reply by acts of faith and love and moral effort, and so "work out our own salvation;" yet it "is God that worketh in us, both to will and to do of His good pleasure." There is no hint in the Bible of anything like imputed righteousness, if it is taken to mean that we can be saved without our own co-operation. There is no basis of reconciliation with God except by becoming morally conformed to the character of God as revealed in Christ. So only when we have become identified with Christ, and so share His life, can we effectually plead His merits.

VI

THE VICARIOUSNESS OF THE ATONEMENT

If we recognize and start with the truth that our Lord is the Second Adam, we need not shrink from saying His sufferings were vicarious. He did something for us that we could not do for ourselves. Man was estranged from God. He could not rescue himself. He did on our behalf and in our nature what we could not do for ourselves. He suffers for us, not *a* man for other men, but as the "Second Adam, the Lord from Heaven," in whom humanity is summed up. Scripture is very plain.[1] The fact is that our Lord's death is both vicarious and representative, and these two aspects of the mystery are not exclusive, but supplementary.

[1] There are two prepositions used: ὑπέρ, 1 Cor. xv. 3, 1 Tim. ii. 6, 1 Pet. ii. 21, 1 Pet. iii. 18; ἀντί, St. Matt. xx. 28, St. Mark x. 45.

Christ suffers for us because He represents us as the Second Adam, "the just for the unjust;" and as for the general objections raised against the vicariousness of suffering, we may observe—

First, that the objection is, in the words of Bishop Butler, just as forcible against the whole constitution of nature as we now see it,[1] the daily course of Divine Providence in the government of the world as it is against Christianity; for, as a matter of fact, there are daily instances all around us of vicarious suffering. So the objection proves too much, since it is as forcible against any intelligent Theism as it is against Christianity.

After all, vicarious suffering is one of the most truly lovely things that human life can show, and Christ's Atonement is the highest and supreme illustration of it. For His act was voluntary, a supreme act of Divine Love. The Good Shepherd voluntarily lays down His life for His sheep.[2] "He was offered because

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[1] Butler, *Analogy*, Part II. chap. v.

[2] Isa. l. 58, Vulgate, "Oblatus est quia ipse voluit."

He desired it." As to its injustice, this could never have really come into people's minds in connection with the Atonement if they had clearly borne in mind Who He is Who is suffering on man's behalf. It is God Who is Himself the Sacrifice. The sacrifice is self-sacrifice. "In this was manifested the love of God, because He laid down His life for us."[1]

"The method of this self-sacrifice may be hard to understand, but self-sacrifice can never be described as injustice," and the Atonement is the supreme instance of self-sacrifice.

Lastly, we must keep hold of the thought already insisted on, that what God first does for us He then does in us. "There is no book of the Bible which allows us to imagine that we can be saved without being made actually righteous. We are pardoned and forgiven at the start in order that we may be made actually righteous at the close."

"All through the New Testament there is no other idea of the end and scope of redemption than that we should be delivered

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[1] 1 St. John iii. 16.

from the actual power (not consequence) of sin;" that we should have our conscience cleansed from dead works to serve the living God. Throughout the New Testament we are forgiven in order to be saved.[1]

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[1] See Bishop Gore in *God's Redemption of Man.* Birmingham Convention, pp. 79, 80.

VII

THE OBEDIENCE OF CHRIST AND HIS BLOOD-SHEDDING

"WITHOUT shedding of blood there is no remission." It will have been noticed by every one that the Passion of our Lord is described by all the Evangelists in greater detail than any other event in His life; and there are, moreover, a large number of passages in other books of the New Testament which speak of our Lord's Blood as the instrument or the means of our redemption. Thus St. Peter tells us that we were "not redeemed with corruptible things, with silver or gold . . . but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot." [1]

So St. John says that the "Blood of Jesus

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[1] 1 St. Peter i. 18, 19.

His Son cleanseth us from all sin."[1] The redeemed in the Apocalypse have "washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb."[2] So St. Paul tells the Roman Christians they are "justified by His blood;"[3] he tells the Ephesians that we "have redemption through His blood;"[4] to the Colossians he speaks of Christ as having "made peace through the blood of His cross."[5] While the Epistle to the Hebrews is full of this thought: "For if the blood of goats and bulls, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling them that have been defiled, sanctify unto the cleanness of the flesh; how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the Eternal Spirit offered Himself without blemish to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?"[6]

The writer speaks of Christians having boldness to enter into the holiest by the "blood of Jesus,"[7] of "the blood of the covenant,"[8] of

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[1] 1 St. John i. 7. [2] Rev. viii. 14.
[3] Rom. v. 9. [4] Eph. i. 7; Eph. ii. 13.
[5] Col. i. 20. [6] Heb. ix. 13, 14.
[7] Heb. x. 19. [8] Heb. x. 29.

"the blood of the eternal covenant,"[1] of Jesus "sanctifying the people with His own blood."[2]

In these last passages he is no doubt thinking of our Lord's own words when He instituted the Holy Eucharist, "This is My Blood of the New Covenant."

But why this insistence on the blood, on its redeeming and cleansing efficacy? It is language suggested, no doubt, by the sacrificial language of the Old Testament. In the Old Testament the blood is regarded as the seal of the life, "the blood is the life"—and the shedding of blood meant the surrender of life. But when applied to Christ and the shedding of His blood, what do words like these import?

To use such language of the blood of a mere man would be absurd, but we are reminded by such phrases that Christ in becoming man did not cease to be God; the Person of the sanctified is the Person of the Son of God made Man for our sakes. The Blood which He shed is, St. Paul does not hesitate to say, the "Blood of God."[3] And if this be so, how can we place

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[1] Heb. xiii. 20. [2] Heb. xiii. 12.
[3] Acts xx. 28.

any limit to the effects of the surrender of Himself to death, the shedding of His Blood? The death of so unique a Person must needs have an altogether unique effect. "No person," says Hooker, "was born of the Virgin but the Person of the Son of God, no Person but the Son of God condemned, the Son of God and no other Person crucified; which only point of Christian belief, the infinite worth of the Son of God, is the very ground of all things believed concerning life and salvation by that which Christ either did or suffered on our behalf."

But there is another aspect of Christ's blood-shedding; it was the crowning act of His life of obedience. "He became obedient unto death," that is, He carried His obedience to the point of death. And regarding the mystery from this point of view, we may perhaps say that God required the obedience of the human race. As Adam had failed through disobedience, so the Second Adam offered that life of perfect obedience as a pledge of the submission of the human race. St. Paul, it will be remembered, contrasts the disobedience of the first Adam with the obedience of the Second. So St. Bernard says: "Non mors, sed voluntas

sponte morientis placuit Deo ; "[1] and St. Anselm insists on the same point when he says, "God willed primarily the obedience of Christ, and only in a secondary sense the death of Christ, because in the sinful conditions of the world ; thus obedience led to death." Thus the death of Christ was man's act and not God's act ; "Whom ye by the hand of lawless men did crucify and slay." [2]

But Christ's obedience does not exempt us from obeying : rather His obedience is the pattern of ours ; Christ was obedient that we might through His obedience derive the power of conforming ourselves to the will of God. The saintliest life is that which is in most perfect conformity to the will of God, *i.e.* the most perfectly obedient life. Similarly He suffered, not to excuse us from suffering here, but in order that the sufferings which we experience by being obedient to His will might in union with His suffering turn to our sanctification. For

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[1] "It was not the death, but the will of one who died voluntarily which pleased God."

[2] Acts ii. 22. See Gore, *Bampton Lectures*, note 37, p. 127.

suffering to the Christian becomes a kind of sacrament.

Throughout the Gospels our Lord makes suffering a condition of discipleship, but while He calls on us to take up the Cross, He Himself turns the Cross into a blessing, and what was before only a chastisement is turned into a means of grace, just as He died not to exempt us from death, but to break the power of death, to transform it. He has transformed suffering as He has transformed death. "As Christ suffered in the flesh, arm ye yourselves also with the same mind."[1]

To sum up. It is well when thinking of the mystery of the Atonement to begin by reflecting that the nature of man as God made him was "very good." Then we must needs be conscious of the terrible havoc and ruin wrought in human nature by *sin*, *i.e.* by lawlessness and rebellion against God. Next we have seen that the purpose of God in redeeming us was to reunite us to God.

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[1] 1 St. Peter iv. 1. See Oxenham, *Catholic Doctrine of the Atonement*, p. 328; and Lyttelton in *Lux Mundi*, p. 310.

Thus we are brought face to face with the Person of the Reconciler. He is Very God, the Eternal Son of God who took our nature in the womb of the Virgin Mother and thus became also Very Man.

His work as Reconciler is to make propitiation by satisfying in our nature the divine law of holiness, so redeeming man from the power of sin and reconciling him to the Father.

Finally, there comes in the personal and individual application of this reconciliation to the penitent sinner by the "means of grace" leading on to the "hope of glory."

VIII

THE ATONEMENT AND THE EUCHARIST[1]

It is clear, both from the Book of the Revelation and in the Epistle to the Hebrews, that our Lord is a Priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek, and that He is ever pleading in heaven the merits of His Passion. Christ is, in St. John's vision, "the Lamb as it had been slain" (in sacrifice), and the hymns round the throne are hymns of sacrifice.

The seer of Patmos saw "in the midst of the throne and of the four living creatures, and in the midst of the elders, a Lamb standing, as

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[1] The greater part of what follows is to be found in the writer's *Holy Eucharist—Sacrifice and Feast*. He is able to reproduce the words here by the courtesy of Messrs. A. R. Mowbray & Co.

it had been slaughtered . . . and they sang a new song, saying, Worthy art Thou . . . for Thou wast slain, and didst purchase unto God with Thy blood men of every tribe, and tongue, and people and nation. . . . Worthy is the Lamb that hath been slaughtered to receive the power, and victory, and wisdom, and might, and honour, and glory, and blessing." [1]

Christ, then, amid all the glories of heaven bears with Him the marks of His Passion, and by His presence pleads His atoning death.

Similarly, the Epistle to the Hebrews, while it insists on the unique character and the all-sufficiency of Christ's Sacrifice on Calvary, yet teaches that Christ is a Priest for ever. He was "once offered to bear the sins of many." [2]

His Body was offered once for all.[3] After "He had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever," He "sat down on the right hand of God." [4] Yet He is a "Priest for ever." He hath an unchangeable Priesthood. He is ever in heaven pleading His once-for-all-offered sacrifice, for "seeing that every high priest is ordained to

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[1] Rev. v. 6–12.
[2] Heb. ix. 28.
[3] *Ibid.* x. 10.
[4] *Ibid.* x. 12.

offer gifts and sacrifices, it is of necessity that this High Priest have somewhat to offer." [1]

The Sacrifice of Calvary can never be repeated, but its virtue lasts on; it is "ever-living and continuous."

And it is ever being pleaded by our Blessed Lord in heaven.

What He does "openly" in heaven His Church does mystically and sacramentally on earth. In celebrating the Eucharist we commemorate His Passion and plead His sacrifice:

"Once, only once, and once for all,
His precious life He gave:
Before the Cross our spirits fall,
And own it strong to save.

"'One offering, single and complete,'
With lips and heart we say;
But what He never can repeat
He shows forth day by day.

"His manhood pleads where now it lives
On heaven's eternal throne,
And where in mystic rite He gives
Its Presence to His own."

[1] Heb. viii. 3.

It is well to remember "the great truth that the Eucharistic Sacrifice, even in its highest aspect, must be put in one line (if we may say so), not with what Christ did once for all upon the cross, but with what He is doing continually in heaven; that as present naturally in heaven, and sacramentally in the Holy Eucharist, the Lamb of God exhibits Himself to the Father, and *pleads* the Atonement as once finished in act, but ever living in operation; that in neither case does He repeat it or add to it. The notion that it was *not* unique or perfect, but could be reiterated or supplemented, in heaven or on earth, was justly denounced as a 'blasphemous fable' in Article XXXI. But this should not lead us to forget that 'the Lamb as it had been slain,' 'appearing in the presence of God for us,' *is* the propitiation for our sins, and even now *tollit peccatæ mundi*, by an intercession consisting in presentation of Himself." [1]

The heavenly offering and the earthly pleading are alike one with the Sacrifice of the Cross. It is in each case the same Sacrifice which is

[1] W. Bright, *Ancient Collects*, p. 144.

pleaded, but at a different stage of its completion. We shall see this more plainly if we remember that sacrifice in the Bible is a complete action consisting of different stages.

First, the victim was presented to the priest.

Secondly, the offerer lays his hands upon the victim as his representative.

Thirdly, the victim was slain.

Fourthly, there followed the sprinkling of the blood, which was the pleading before God, the making atonement.

Finally, there was the consumption of the victim whether wholly by fire (as in the burnt offering) or by the partaking of the priest, or of the priest together with the offerer and his friends (as in the sin and peace offerings).

All these different "movements" together made up the one act of sacrifice, and all find their counterpart and fulfilment in the Sacrifice of Jesus Christ, which indeed they foreshadowed.

First, there is the willing surrender of Himself. "Lo, I come to do Thy will, O God."

Secondly, He is our Representative who

bare our sins in His own body on the tree.[1]

Thirdly, His death upon the cross.

Fourthly, the high-priestly pleading of Christ within the veil.

Fifthly, the earthly counterpart of this in the Eucharist, wherein we plead the merits of His Passion, and feed sacramentally on His Body and Blood.

The Eucharist, then, is a sacrificial action wherein we plead the Passion of Christ, and wherein we feed upon His Body and Blood.

We cannot come before God in virtue of any other offering but that of Christ on the cross.

"Between our sins and their reward
We set the Passion of Thy Son our Lord."

In the Prayer-book service we pray God to accept, "this our sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving [*i.e.* our Eucharistic Sacrifice], that by the merits and death of His Son, and through faith in His Blood, we and all His whole

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[1] 1 St. Peter ii. 24.

Church may obtain remission of our sins, and all other benefits of His Passion."

So wrote John Keble: "The true oblation in the Christian Sacrifice is in no sense earthly or material; it is altogether spiritual. . . . For the true obligation in the Eucharist is not the bread and wine; that is only the vessel which contains or the garment which veils it; but that which our Lord by the hands of the priest offers to the Father in the Holy Eucharist is His own Body and Blood, the very same which He offers and presents to Him, with which, as St. Paul says, He appears before Him *now* night and day continually in heaven in commemoration of His having offered it once for all in His Passion and death upon the cross. It is the one great reality, summing up in itself all the memorial sacrifices of old." [1]

But when we thus plead His sacrifice we have to remember that He is the Head of that Body of which we are members. In presenting Christ, therefore, we present also ourselves, and so we continue and say, "Here we offer and present unto Thee, O Lord, ourselves, our

[1] *Eucharistic Adoration*, p. 38.

souls and bodies, to be a reasonable, holy, and lively sacrifice unto Thee."

"Look, Father, look on His anointed face,
And only look on us as found in Him."

And if we again turn to the service in the Prayer-book we shall find there traces of a threefold offering to God.

First, we offer bread and wine. Then, in answer to the prayers of His Church through the words of consecration, and by the power of the Holy Ghost, the bread and wine become sacramentally His Body and Blood; and we plead His Sacrifice before the eternal Father.

Thirdly, after reception, we offer ourselves to God in union with Him. This is the purpose for which we were created, to offer ourselves wholly to God, to be and to do what He would have us; to live in loving communion with Him all our days.

Surely we cannot fail to see how the Holy Eucharist, on account of the very nature of its relation on the one hand to the Christian life and on the other to the sacrifice of the death of

Christ, is and must be the one supreme and central act of worship.

For what is worship, if it is real, but the expression of that entire surrender and submission to and dependence upon the Divine Will, which the Creator claims at every moment? That most perfect self-surrender which throughout His most holy life the Incarnate Word made to His Eternal Father, He completed and made perfect in His supreme act of submission when He died on the cross. In that act He not only won grace and strength for every act of submission that the service of God should demand for all time, but He gave them their value, a power of acceptance with God. Every temptation overcome, every act of self-sacrifice, all sufferings patiently borne for the love of God were then offered to Him. The whole Christian life—that for which the apostles, and after them the pastors of the Church, were to labour—to make the Gentiles obedient; that the offering up of the Gentiles might be acceptable, being sanctified by the Holy Ghost;[1] all this was summed up in the one sacrifice of the

[1] See Rom. xv. 16, 18.

death of Christ. And hence it is that in the Eucharist we not only offer ourselves, our souls and bodies, to be a reasonable, lively, and holy sacrifice, but we offer to God the one full, perfect, and sole sufficing Sacrifice whereby alone the offering of ourselves could be efficacious and acceptable. And there in the spiritual food of His most Holy Body and Blood, whose sacrifice we commemorate and plead, we find that strength and refreshment we need for that life of service of which all acts of worship are the pledge and the expression.

And so most surely it is that every time we take part, whether as priest or layman, in the Eucharistic Sacrifice, we are gathered to the Cross of Christ, as truly, though spiritually, as if we had stood on Calvary and beheld with our bodily eyes the accomplishment of His sacrifice. He is set forth crucified in our midst, the enduring expression of the Christian life and of all it means and needs. And then, when we draw nigh and take that Holy Sacrament, we dwell in Him and He in us, "we are one with Christ and Christ with us." Surely this is atonement, reconciliation, union with God in the fullest possible sense. As John lay on

His breast, partook of that divine food, stood beneath His cross, so we each in our allotted place in time throughout the ages, till He come, draw nigh to Him and He draws nigh to us—

"Prayer shall not fail, but higher would He lead thee;
His bosom Friend ate of that awful Bread;
So will He wait all day to bless and feed thee—
Come thou adoring to be blessed and fed." [1]

[1] Keble, *Lyra Innocentium.*

THE END

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